



# ECEAP

WASHINGTON STATE'S



## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**Preschool for low-income and at-risk children in Washington State**

## Impacts of Higher Costs & Teacher Salaries on ECEAP

**Over the past several years, upward cost pressures on ECEAP have been too great to be met through administrative efficiencies alone.** The impact has been felt statewide, with each region facing many issues. Examples include:

- ◆ **Increased costs for teacher and staff salaries and health insurance benefits**, rising from 70 percent of ECEAP operating costs in 1985 to over 80 percent in 2001. An estimated two-thirds of ECEAP teachers work in the public system and thus are directly impacted by legislative action and initiatives on teacher salaries and benefits.
  - ✓ The 1999-2001 Biennial Budget granted salary increases of up to 15.4 percent to public teachers.
  - ✓ Initiative 732 started automatic yearly cost-of-living increases to public teachers in FY2002.
  - ✓ ECEAP did not receive any of the dedicated funds to offset these obligations, but had to rely on a yearly vendor rate increase (VRI) to cover the increased costs.
  - ✓ Statewide, ECEAP received \$1,681,000 as a VRI for FY02-03 while the estimated FY02-03 impact of I-732's mandatory salary increases on the two-thirds of ECEAP teachers in publicly-funded organizations is \$1,614,319; little room is left for handling other cost increases such as facility rental, transportation, materials, insurance, etc.
  - ✓ The remaining one-third of ECEAP teachers who work for private organizations bargain for higher salaries and benefits due to market pressure from public increases.
  - ✓ Non-paid volunteers that are used to maintain appropriate adult-child ratios in classrooms have become more difficult to find due to WorkFirst employment requirements.
- ◆ **Loss of in-kind and other resources**, including community transportation and public health funds; medical, dental, and mental health services; and free or low-cost space lost to higher leases or school districts that are reducing class size.
- ◆ **Impacts of program costs increasing faster than ECEAP funding include:**
  - ✓ Children and families cannot access as many hours of service (2,596 fewer in FY 01).
  - ✓ Adult-child ratios have been decreased (formerly 1:6 in all classrooms, now often 1:9).
  - ✓ Staff positions have been cut and family support caseloads have increased.
  - ✓ Child and family enrollment slots have been reduced (In FY 01, 181 of the 7032 slots statewide were cut, reducing service to an estimated 210 children and their families).
  - ✓ Full dental, medical, and mental health services have been reduced or eliminated.
  - ✓ Transportation to and from some programs has been eliminated.

**ECEAP: Ready to Succeed!**

